

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 COME-00 AID-20

PC-15 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03 OMB-01 ACDA-19 IO-13 TRSE-00

RSR-01 (ADP) W

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R 111300Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4538

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1395

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, MT, IT

SUBJ: ITALIAN ASSISTANCE TO PIONEER CORPS

REF: VALLETTA 1289

1. PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF, ACCORDING TO PRESS, INFORMED PARLIAMENT JULY 11 THAT NEGOTIATIONS FOR FRENCH ASSISTANCE TO PIONEER CORPS STILL PROCEEDING BUT AGREEMENT AS BEEN REACHED WITH ITALY. LABOR MINISTER CASSAR ALSO ANNOUNCED 703 VOLUNTEERS FROM EMERGENCY LABOR CORPS, 20 NCOS AND 41 PRIVATES FROM GOZO AND 110 NCOS FROM MALTA HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECRUITED INTO CORPS. CASSAR SAID ANOTHER GROUP OF 105 NCOS WILL JOIN ON JULY 17, AND PRIVATES WOULD BE JOINING IN GROUPS OF 500 EACH WEEK BETWEEN JULY 30 AND AUGUST 25 TOGETHER WITH REMAINING NCOS. A SECOND GROUP FROM THE EMERGENCY LABOR CORPS WILL JOIN BETWEEN AUGUST 16 AND SEPTEMBER 26TH.

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2. EARLIER THAT DAY ITALIAN AMBASSADOR MASSA BERNUCCI

INDICATED TO US THAT ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO PROCEED WITH ASSISTANCE AND HE EXPECTS ANOTHER SESSION WITH ARMED FORCES COMMANDER SANMUT TAGLIAFERRO AND FOREIGN MINISTRY WITHIN NEXT TEN DAYS TO TIE DOWN DETAILS.

3. MASSA BERNUCCI USED FIGURE OF 100, INCLUDING BOTH OFFICERS AND NCOS AS LEVEL OF ITALIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO WOULD COME TO MALTA. HE SAID ITALY IS PREPARED TO PROVIDE UNIFORMS AND RIFLES. WHILE MASSA BERNUCCI BELIEVES ITALY'S POSITION ON NO REPEAT NO LIBYAN PARTICIPATION HAS BEEN ACCEPTED, HE STILL WANTS TO GET A FINAL AND CLEAR ANSWER FROM MALTESE.

4. WITH REGARD TO FINANCING, MASSA BERNUCCI USED FIGURE OF U.S. THREE MILLION DOLLARS EQUIVALENT FOR ITALIAN CONTRIBUTION, BUT FURTHER EXPLANATION INDICATED THIS WOULD IN FACT BE LOW INTEREST LOAN.

5. MEANWHILE DATT REPORTS FROM BRITISH SOURCES THAT FIRST BATTALION OF 1000 MEN HAS ALREADY ENTERED ON DUTY AND HAS BEEN ISSUED OLD RIFLES FROM EXISTING STOCKS FOR DRILL PURPOSES.

6. COMMENT: MASSA BERNUCCI STILL SEEMS SOMEWHAT NERVOUS ABOUT BRITISH REACTION TO ITALIAN ROLE. WE, HOWEVER, HAVE DETECTED NO PARTICULAR BRITISH APPREHENSION ON THIS SCORE AND MASSA BERNUCCI'S CONCERNS MAY BE DUE AS MUCH AS ANYTHING TO LACK OF GOOD COMMUNICATIONS WITH HIS BRITISH COLLEAGUE.

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